

MONOLINGUAL DIGLOSSIA: A STYLISTIC DEVICE IN HAITIAN CREOLE

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1. The Language Variation Systems. In order to identify and describe the whole range of language variation in Haitian Creole it is necessary to posit five variation systems:

- (1) a regional or geographic dialect system;
- (2) a social dialect system;
- (3) a historical dialect system;
- (4) a style system;
- (5) and a Gallicizing system, which we suggest in this paper could profitably be called a system of "monolingual diglossia."

The regional dialect system is characterized by three distinct geographical dialect areas plus a number of well-defined transitional zones at the two border areas. The social dialect system exhibits a contrast between Rural Creole and Urban Creole. The regional and social dialects are only very rarely involved in code-switching, though the overall direction of language change seems to be moving rather definitely toward the Urban Creole of the Central area, which includes the capital city of Port-au-Prince.

There is little data available for analyzing the historical dialects. What is available in the few quotations and song lyrics indicates a close relationship with the older Creole dialects of Louisiana and the French Antilles. Songs with archaic Creole elements are sung in the present, but to my knowledge there is no current use of any of these items in code-switching analogous to the church use of Early Modern English in present-day formal prayers and religious poetry.

On the surface, the style system is relatively simple, consisting of only two basic levels: formal and informal. These two style levels contrast in the rate of speech, the distribution of allomorphs, in morphophonemics, in syntactic phrasal and clause markers, and in lexical choice. They are situationally distributed in complementation in a matrix of contrasts between formal and informal plus public and private. Only formal Creole is used in formal public situations, and only informal Creole is used in informal private situations. In formal private situations and informal public situations other variables determine which style level shall be used, such as the status relationship of the persons involved and the degree of seriousness of the discourse or subject.

Among groups of bilingual speakers of French and Haitian Creole the style system has the potential of becoming elaborated by the introduction of code-switching to French, which has been described as diglossia by Ferguson (1959) and in the Haitian situation by Stewart (1962). The analysis of these two investigators is only partially true for Haitian Creole, as they did not take into account the fact that Creole itself has both formal and informal style levels. Where Ferguson and Stewart ascribe Creole to informal and private situations, it is really the informal level of Creole that they are indicating. The code-switching in formal and private situations is done volitionally between formal Creole and French. Most bilingual Haitians either cannot express themselves in informal French or at least do not habitually. So, for bilingual speakers, the potential of diglossia augments the two-level style system of Creole into a three-level system for their purposes of communication, French being an extra-formal level used in the most demanding formal and public occasions. This extra-formal level of language is not available as such to the Creole monolingual.

2. The Gallicizing System. There is, however, an additional style mechanism available to the Creole monolingual in the form of a Gallicizing system which parallels the diglossic system of bilinguals. In fact, bilinguals use it when they are operating within the Creole system. The simple principle of the Gallicizing system consists of moving from wherever one is linguistically toward what one conceives to be the Standard French form. Or in other words, it is a stylistic device for modifying Creole so that its similarity to French models is increased or decreased according to the ability and purpose of the speaker. This is possible because all Creole speakers have some knowledge, however little, of what they conceive to be French. It is not "borrowing" from French in the usual sense but simply dipping into a reserve inventory labeled "French" which is part of the individual's hypersystem. It may involve a shift in phonology, grammar, or lexicon.

Almost all Creole monolinguals make a conscious identification of correspondences between what they think is French and what they know is Creole. Whether this identification is accurate or not has no significance for the functioning of the system, though it may aid in identifying the social dialect of the speaker. Each Creole monolingual knows, for example, that in some lexemes he has /i/ where French has /u/. If he knows where and in what lexemes, his Gallicizing may reproduce a close approximation of the French word. If not, his Gallicizing may produce hypercorrections such as /fudèl/ 'faithful' in place of the French cognate /fidèl/ which is identical with Creole. He knows that French has post-vocalic /r/ in some words, but if he knows very little French he may add it in the wrong place, as in /projè/ 'project' for French /proje/. French speakers, of course, Gallicize their Creole with very little effort--often in genuine code switching; but there are also Creole monolinguals who cannot speak French but have learned to Gallicize so successfully that one would think they were French speakers.

The function of Gallicizing is to attempt to raise the level

of style identification to the next higher level, to embellish speech for esthetic purposes, and to build credibility by demonstrating that one "knows" the French forms. Like normal style levels, once the desired identification has been achieved, the discourse may be continued with or without the Gallicizing.

Some monolinguals and bilinguals habitually speak Creole only in a highly Gallicized form. This is particularly true of successful students from humble origins. For the Creole monolingual, the process of learning French is an intensification and permanent form of the Gallicizing system with which he is already familiar. In the context of such a student's psychological problems of identification and striving for upward mobility, he may "forget" his Creole forms as he learns the French equivalents and end up with a more restricted linguistic system than the secure elite student who learned French at home but prefers to speak "gros Creole" (unsophisticated Creole) just for the fun of it. However, Gallicizing is the sine qua non of the successful public speaker in Creole, essential to the rural politician and rural preacher especially.

3. The Mechanisms of Gallicizing. In phonology, Gallicizing involves the substituting of French type phonemes where there is a contrast of item or distribution with Creole. In the Gallicizing of Rural Creole, the substitution of an uvular /r/ for the velar /r/ is not uncommon. Even more frequent is the addition of post-vocalic /r/ in the Central and Southern regional dialects of Rural Creole. In Central Rural Creole, the restoration of /h/ to French words which have /r/ in Creole is an important Gallicism, based on Haitian French as a model, not Standard Parisian French. The most common type of Gallicism is the introduction of the French series of front rounded vowels into Rural Creole. In some varieties of Urban Creole, all of which have some of the front rounded vowels, /ø/ and /eu/ (the mid and low vowels) are ordinarily neutralized as /eu/ (the low rounded vowel). One form of Gallicizing consists of restoring this contrast in Creole cognates on the model of Standard French. Another common phonological Gallicism is found in the restoration of the final consonant in French clusters which have been reduced in Creole, especially /r/, /l/ and /t/, as in /résponsabl/ 'responsible' vs. /résponsab/, or /aveugl/ 'blind' vs. /avèg/. The switch to front rounded vowels takes place concomitantly when these are involved in the French model. This latter type of phonological Gallicism is common in Urban Creole.

In morphology, Gallicism seldom involves the adding of French inflection, but it does involve the employment of the French derivational patterns in the creation by analogy of new words by Rural Creole speakers. Some of these will be nonces, but others are part of the common Gallicizing inventory. Some examples of such nouns are:

/rémèsisman/ 'giving of thanks' from /rémèsié/ and /-man/

/finisman/ 'finish' from /fini/ and /-man/

/désidasyon/ 'decision' from /désidé/ and /-syon/

/divizasyon/ 'division' from /divizé/ and /-syon/

There are some adverbs which vary even more from French models but are used to effect the Gallicism of Rural Creole (all with the suffix /-man/):

/toujouman/ 'still, always' from /toujou/ 'always'

/an jenneralman/ 'in general' from /an jenneral/ 'in general'

/aparabman/ 'apparently' from French apparemment.

Another morphological Gallicism is involved in restoring meaning and function to the zero morpheme in Creole nouns which were borrowed complete with the French definite article or part of the indefinite article:

Rural Creole /lavi a/ 'life' Gallicized as /la vi/

RC /lapriè a/ 'the prayer' Gallicized as /priè a/ or further /la priè/

Syntactically, whole phrases from French may be embedded in Creole as a Gallicizing device:

/èsk ou va fè la soud orèy/ 'will you return a deaf ear?

/m-té va é vyen/ 'I came and went'

Or a whole French quotation, as from the Bible in a sermon:

/li di, hat twa, désann/ 'he said, "Come down quickly!"'

The question of when a word or phrase is French and when it is Creole is resolved by the concept of the Gallicizing system. If the items borrowed from French are found in a Creole matrix, it is Gallicized Creole. Conversely, if Creole items are found in a French matrix, it is Creolized French.

4. Monolingual diglossia. It is apparent from this description of the Haitian Creole Gallicizing system that it parallels the form and function of the system of diglossia as used by bilingual speakers in many different areas of the world. We propose that the term "monolingual diglossia" be applied to such a system when it occurs, as it has been reported privately to this writer.

In a diglossic situation, the description of the low language, then, is incomplete without the analysis of the system of monolingual diglossia, where it exists. If foreigners are to master the low language adequately, they must master the monolingual diglossic system as well as the basic style system. A full linguistic description must also indicate how the monolingual diglossic system is related to

the geographical and social dialects, much in the same way that an intonation system is superimposed on a tone system. In this way, most, if not all, of the intergradations of variation in language may be accounted for.

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